

Canada

'We love pain and we love doing this'

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Some New Brunswickers are choosing to be punched, smashed with chairs and have cheese graters stomped into their foreheads in a new event dubbed "extreme backyard wrestling."

Saint John police said there's little they can do to stop the spectacle, which is similar to what the professionals do on TV â only the wrestlers don't have any training, the blood is real and the participants often get hurt.

"We love pain and we love doing this," said Adam Craft, with the Passion for Pain Wrestling Organization. "Everybody loves wrestling and the more hard-core it is, the more they love it."

In a typical match, the wrestlers smash each other with chairs, ladders and tube lights. They also land kicks and bare-fisted punches to the head and stomach.

One popular stunt involves putting a cheese grater on a wrestler's forehead, which his opponent stomps with his boots. It's guaranteed to shred some skin and draw rivulets of blood.

Craft said the moves are choreographed and the wrestlers don't try to cause serious harm. But he said it's an extreme version of wrestling because the participants know they'll feel some real pain.

'Everybody loves wrestling and the more hard-core it is, the more they love it' â wrestler

By the time they leave the ring, most of them are bleeding from cuts all over their bodies.

'Carnival of Carnage' draws crowds

Craft was crowned the top wrestler at a recent event, which the participants dubbed the Carnival of Carnage 2. His championship belt was made from a piece of cardboard and an ink pen.

The show drew about 75 spectators, many of them children and teenagers from the tough streets of Saint John's north end.

They gathered around the makeshift, backyard ring, screaming encouragement to their favourite wrestlers.

One young fan said he never missed one of the backyard shows.

"It's what I want to do when I grow up. I want to be a wrestler," he said.

'If someone doesn't like it, don't watch'

Saint John police said they're concerned about the matches. But as they're free of charge, involve consenting adults and are held on private property, they're not illegal.

Craft said there's no reason for the law to get involved.

"It's our bodies, so if we're willing to do it, they should let us take it into our own hands," he said. "If someone doesn't like it, don't watch."

None of the half-dozen members of the Passion For Pain Wrestling Organization has been severely injured.

But Jeff Dunning said he realized it could be dangerous after he had his ear sliced in two.

"The fold-up chair opened up and it was a little bit opened, and when I got hit, it closed on my ear. But we controlled it pretty good."

The wrestlers said their dream is to turn professional some day.

But if that never happens, they said they'll always enjoy spending occasional Sunday afternoons together, beating each other up.

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